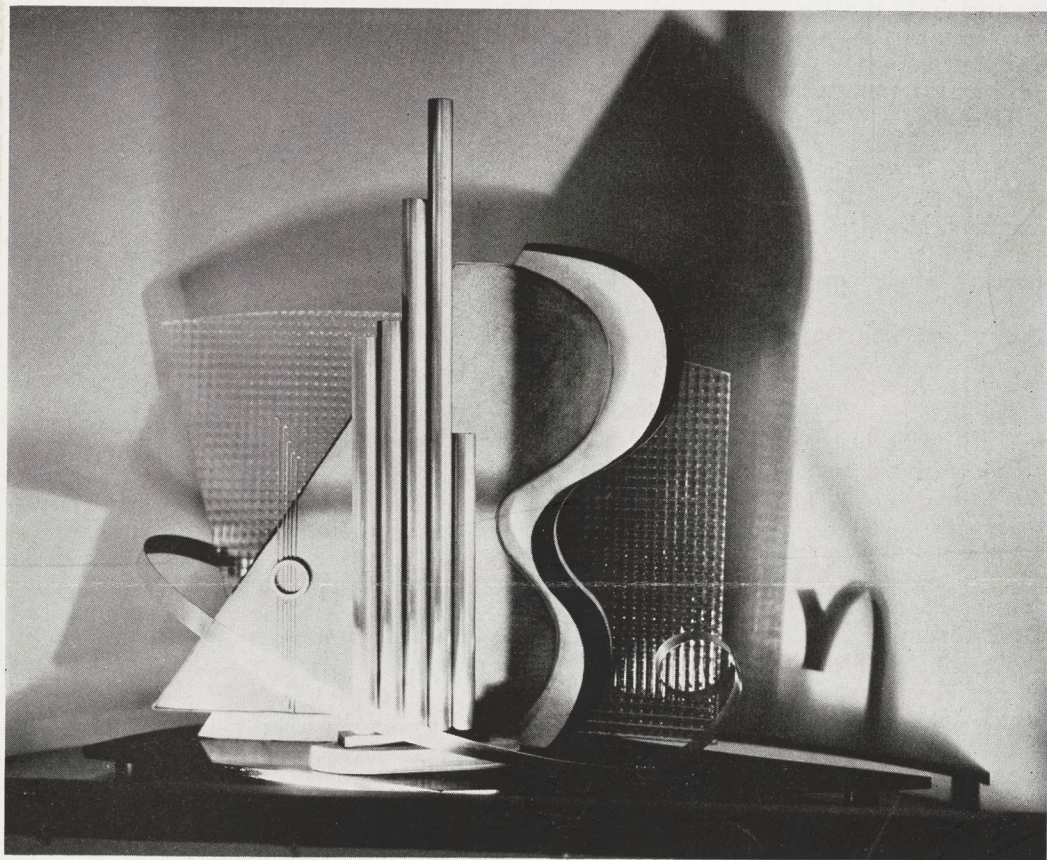


# SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

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### *Design for Music Foyer*

By ELAH HALE HAYES AND ROBERT GANN

Mural Conceptualism Exhibition at S. F. Museum of Art

## On Conceptualism

By BECKFORD YOUNG

ABOUT two years ago the first exhibit under the title "Conceptualism" was held. The title was used not for the purpose of establishing another ism but rather as a carrier for ideas which were felt to be existent. Many artists have felt that the arts and artists are not playing the integral part in our present civilization which they should. In the past most of our civilizations made use of artists as a very necessary and acceptable part of society. If, then, we do not find ourselves in this position today possibly we should examine

*Continued on Page 6, Col. 2*

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

IT MAY have been the strain of the controversy over Braque's "Yellow Cloth" that was responsible for the lack of critical excitement that would have given sparkle and illumination to the Mural Conceptualism show, at present enjoying the hospitality of the San Francisco Museum of Art.

Only two years ago lay and duly appointed critics could not think of a punishment to fit the crime of a group of artists united under a banner—the name of which was said to be a “punster’s paradise.” Now the press is non-

*Continued on Page 5, Col. 2*



## Merry Christmas

*An interview with Una McCann and Jack Wilkinson*

THE Christmas Season approaches, bringing its usual diversity of gayeties and responsibilities. Within the Art Association, yearly programs are being concluded and that eternal striving towards a better and brighter New Year fills the imagination with countless possibilities.

Among the announcements that have come to the Editor's desk, particular interest is attached to the Christmas dinner, to be given by the Alumni Association of the California School of Fine Arts, honoring Miss Una McCann and Mr. Jack Wilkinson. These two young artists, recent recipients of the Phelan Traveling Scholarship, have just returned from Europe.

Discussing their travels with them brought to me a realization of the importance of this scholarship plan.

"I'm often asked", said Jack Wilkinson, "to briefly describe just what a year and a half abroad has meant to me. One might as well be asked 'what have you observed in this past decade'. Although the experience is now a normal segment of my memory, it seems as if time has telescoped. Months were like years from the quantity of events and impressions crowded within.

"My principal observation was that the conflict of old with new was much more intense abroad. Automobiles are troublesome intruders in the narrow cabled lanes of Chartres. Radios do not harmonize so well with the tempo of Gothic and Feudal architecture.

"Man has lived exciting history on European soil—his miseries, mistakes, hopes and achievements have left a profound record of dignity and aspiration in art and architecture. Life stems from the old order and it is too large a portion of our culture to be disdained. Seeing it has given me new meaning for the term *classic*. The *classic* is a system of aesthetics based on rythmical intervals of form in space—perpetual, but limited and mortal, too, like the sound of a heart beat. Great art, be it the Parthenon, Beethoven, Giotto or Massacio is classic structure interpreted by individual genius.

"An artist must have something rare, or unique in his own nature. This universal classic scheme must be filtered through a transitory mortal identity."

"I feel that the main thing that Europe has done for me is to change my attitude toward painting from an instinctive, emotional ap-

proach to a more intellectual one", reflected Una McCann. "I discovered tremendous stimulation in studying the works of Poussin and Rubens. Seeing the master works of the great periods gives one a point of view that is more universal. One recognizes the basic principles that permeate all forms and traditions.

"For instance, when we visited the cloister of San Triomphe at Arles I was so impressed by a carved stone capital. It represented a lion's head and claws, part of the decoration of the cloister. The treatment of the head, the stylized mane—like a sun burst—resembled so closely an antique Chinese decoration in the New York's Metropolitan they could have emanated from the same tradition.

"The Oriental influence in this spot in Southern France was an interesting example of the spread of ideas.

"A marvelous experience was the day spent at the Villa Dei Misteri near Pompeii. The frescoes, representing a marriage feast, were painted in the first years of the Christian era—yet in many ways they are utterly modern. One finds in them the same influence that we find in Giotto and Goya and also the French moderns. They seem to encompass all that is basically fine."

The art centers of Europe, the peoples of Europe, problems of art, and politics and society were discussed and analyzed as they relived in retrospect their travels abroad. But a confused Europe became impossible to paint in. Taut nerves and preparations for war made a return home both necessary and desirable.

So they are back again in San Francisco in time for the holiday season. And to them, as well as to every member of the Art Association and its affiliations, the Bulletin says "Merry Christmas".

M. R.



### Alumni Offers Scholarship

A night school scholarship to the California School of Fine Arts is to be given by the Alumni Association to one of its members. Persons interested in study at the school should submit work not later than December 30, 1939, at the school office.

Work, in any medium, will be judged by the faculty of the school. At least four pieces of work should be entered. Decision of the judges will be announced in time to permit entering the night school on January 8, 1940.



## Contemporary Exhibition to be Held

**T**HE San Francisco Museum of Art has received a Prospectus of the second Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American paintings to be held at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, March 9, 1940 to April 21, 1940.

The John Barton Payne Medals will be awarded to the two artists who, in the opinion of the jury, submit the finest work. In addition, \$3,000 in interest, accumulated under the John Barton Payne Endowment Fund, is available for Purchase Awards.

Paintings must be suitably framed and in condition for exhibition when received, and *not more than two pictures* by any one artist may be submitted to the jury.

(a) Artists desiring to submit their works must fill out one entry card for each picture.

These cards should be sent to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, and must be received not later than Saturday, February 10th.

(b) The last day for receiving work at the agency in New York City (W. S. Budworth & Son, 424 West 52nd Street) Tuesday, February 13, not later than 4:30 P.M.

(c) Last day for receiving work at the Virginia Museum, Monday, February 19, at 4 P.M.

Further information at S. F. Museum of Art.



## Children's Party

The annual Christmas Party for children attending the museum Saturday morning Art

Classes will be held Saturday, December 16, from 1 to 4 P.M. Parents and friends are cordially invited to attend.

An exhibition of selected works of the classes will be on view. Entertainment and refreshments will be enjoyed.

## Joins Staff

Katherine Field Caldwell, well known lecturer and writer on art subjects, has been appointed to the staff of the San Francisco Museum of Art. Mrs. Caldwell will give public lectures in the galleries and also conduct some of the art appreciation courses.

Mrs. Caldwell received her Master's Degree in Art at Harvard University. Later she joined the American University in Rome on an extensive study tour through Greece. Mrs. Caldwell was the director of the Educational Department at the Palace of Fine Arts at the Fair.



Judy

By GENEVIEVE RIXFORD SARGEANT

From One Man Show of Oils, S. F. Museum of Art.



## San Francisco Art Association Bulletin

Published Monthly by The S. F. Art Association  
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Associates.....RALPH STACKPOLE, WILLIAM HESTHAL  
RINALDO CUNEO.

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### Letter to Editor

*The following letter will be of interest to our readers. The Bulletin acknowledges Mrs. Salinger's contribution with real appreciation.*

Dear Mildred Rosenthal:—

Within the narrow confines of your Art Association Bulletin you bring forth material which is varied, challenging and often significant.

Your editorial, in the November issue, "Artist and Man", raises anew a vital question. I agree with you fully. I would go further yet. I would say: The artist, in any field, cannot remain apart and estranged from the society in which he lives without condemning himself and his work to ultimate sterility. The major factors of society being of a politico-economic nature, the artist, like all his fellow-men must perforce reckon with this fact. He must, if he is alive at all, learn to understand the basic laws which govern the fast changing social pattern. He must consciously become part of this change. The result will be for the individual artist as well as for the group an integrated culture which will reflect itself in a greater art, in an art which will be more directly related to society, more functional, in the human sense.

Let us not, however, mistake this conscious and understanding participation of the artist in the life of society for the false attempts of the opportunist who takes to forms faster than to contents and soon mistakes the one for the other. *A social painting, or a social novel, is not per se socially and culturally significant.*

Yours sincerely,

JEHANNE BIETRY SALINGER



The San Francisco Museum of Art is presenting one of the finest private collections of maps and atlases in the world—the collection of Mr. Alfred H. de Vries of The Hague, Holland. The exhibition, called *400 Years of Map-making*, gives a survey of the development of cartography from the 16th Century to our own day.

*400 Years of Mapmaking* will remain on view through December 17.

## Our Eastern Correspondent

*The following are excerpts from a letter by Harriet Whedon:*

"I've come to the conclusion that many of us in the West have an inflated idea as to the New York market. It really is not here. In fact, to date, we have no new painters that are vital. The Whitney Museum has an excellent show of American Art—but few new names or new paintings. The most exciting exhibition I've seen to date is the Albert Ryder at the Knoelder Galleries. I have seen it many times—it is thrilling—all the qualities that make a great painter—a relief after galleries and galleries of French paintings . . .

"To appreciate three floors of Picasso takes a sturdy head, to say nothing of sturdy legs. And the people treat it like a three ring circus . . . The Museum depressed me. There is a charge of twenty-five cents. All sorts of things are sold at the entrance, and all the time so many in attendance you are bothered . . . Today I spent three hours in Macy's Department Store. There, among all sorts of things to sell, I found four shelves of sculpture—wood, clay, etc.—beautiful work! Zorach and six or eight well-known sculptors. Prices range from \$8.50 to \$49.00 . . . I've just read the Art Association Bulletin . . . I assure you San Francisco and its people will always be close to my heart."

Mrs. Whedon inclosed a clipping from the New York Herald Tribune, nearly a column dealing with an exhibition of allegorical surrealist paintings at the Rockefeller Center by Frede Vidar. Says the Herald Tribune: "Mr. Vidar has taken ten typical sections of the country and painted his impressions of the life and people, past and present, of each section. But just where symbolism ends and surrealism begins is difficult for the casual observer to discern . . . It is obvious to anyone that his portrayal of a machine gun lying on a valentine greeting in his painting of Chicago is an allusion to the St. Valentine Day Massacre of 1929 . . . Also portrayed are Washington, the Desert, New York, San Francisco, Utah and the dust-swept farms of Kansas . . . Mr. Vidar, born in Denmark, is a naturalized American. He studied at the California School of Fine Arts and the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris."



Art Association members are invited to attend the Christmas dinner given by the Alumni Association of the California School of Fine Arts, December 14, 7 P.M., at the school. Guests of honor will be Miss Una McCann and Mr. Jack Wilkinson. Reservations, 75 cents.



## Student Exhibition

By LEE RANDOLPH

**A**N EVENT of special interest to members of the Art Association and the alumni is the annual Midwinter Exhibition of students' work, sponsored by the Associated Student Body of the school, which opens with a preview on Friday afternoon, December 8, from three to five o'clock at the California School of Fine Arts. This is the students' own show—produced by them, selected and hung by a student jury.

The show is divided into five classifications as follows: oil, graphic, sculpture, crafts, and water color. Three prizes will be awarded in each classification by a faculty jury. The show will include much work done outside of the classroom and will reflect the youthful enthusiasm and trends of these coming artists. The exhibition will be open to the public through the holiday recess and until January 20. Most of the exhibits are for sale at very moderate prices, and might offer suggestion for Christmas gifts.

The Alumni Association of the School is giving five prizes of \$5.00 each. The awards are listed (1) Oil Paintings, to include advanced and elementary as one, (2) Graphic, including commercial art, (3) Sculpture, (4) Crafts, and (5) Watercolors, and media in direct color aside from oils. Awards are to be known as "Alumni Association Awards."

### Spring Semester

The spring semester of the school will open, after the Christmas recess of three weeks, on Monday, January 8. During the fall semester, in addition to continuous work in the fine arts, the courses of study leading directly into professional fields of applied arts have also shown excellent results. An effort is made to give students the benefit of contact with professional problems and how they are solved. Thus students of the Commercial Department have recently visited the plant of the Schmidt Lithograph Company and the Commercial Art & Engraving Company. In addition, Mr. Carroll Harris of the firm of Mackenzie and Harris addressed the students on "Printing and Printing Types". Students of interior decoration, through the generous courtesy of local firms and decorators, have opportunity to visit shops and stores where examples of materials and procedure may be studied. Students of fine arts have been personally conducted in study of the splendid art of the Exposition, as also the many exhibitions in our city museums.

Fall enrollment exceeded that of many years.

## On Conceptualism

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

*Continued from Page 1, Col. 2*

committal, while the public attendance is surprisingly varied. I wonder whether that effective new Wrigley poster, seen everywhere, helped to bridge the gap and indicate the conditioning of public taste to the offerings of the conceptualists.

Just as in the days of the rift in the "American Subject" school, the show may be characterized as displaying a concern with the highly imaginative field of investigation into possibilities of abstract expression, etc., projection into which forms a vital part of one's artistic experience. So much for that.

If you want to know mine, an architect's opinion, they, the conceptualists, may not be providing any touchstones, but they *are* providing at least turning points, and, upwards.

Other schools have emphasized the futility of organized attempts at producing "group art". It is, they said, depersonalized and is enjoyed only by its cult. The old accusations are also to the effect that it is derivative of European influences, especially in its French affiliations. It has no umbilical attachment to the American spirit.

In my opinion, time has modified the picture. To begin with, we have here a number of artists who accumulated good disciplinary experience, derived after a completed series of Federal Art Projects, as part contribution to the rise of American culture. This enviable situation has resulted in an impressive disregard for fanciful materials as if the palette was restricted with maturing experience of the artists. Created patterns ran inevitably to the chosen materials. Familiar textures, basic and essential, enhanced the desire to touch. In many cases the artists produced a relationship to methods as well as to eye enjoyment. Nothing provocative, as the bed springs of yore, was used in this exhibition.

To continue without malice to the exhibitors, if I were to impose advice upon artists and patrons about the choice of medium, I would have ruled out fur murals in fur salons, in spite of the successful result exhibited. And not to disparage another nice study, why should radio parts be used for a broadcasting studio decoration any more than blueprints for walls in a den for a tired engineer?

I question whether symbolism would promise more emotion, or evocation of mood, than that produced by mere reasoned pattern. But a successful abstraction must become more than an arbitrary arrangement. With that in mind let's look forward to the next exhibit.



# SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

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## Current Exhibitions

*Amberg-Hirth*, 165 Post Street: Special showing of unusual holiday wreaths, made by California Artists.

*California Palace of the Legion of Honor*, Lincoln Memorial Park: Continuing through December 31, Italian Renaissance Bronzes. (Collection of Mrs. Charles Baldwin, Colorado Springs). Continuing through December 11, Paintings of Spain by Wells M. Sawyer. Continuing through December 11, Memorial Exhibition of Paintings by Orrin M. Peck. Opening December 29, Loan Exhibition of Old and Modern Masters. Continuing through December 31, Greek Vases, from the collections of the Museum and the University of California.

*California School of Fine Arts*, 800 Chestnut Street: Opening December 8 and continuing through the month, Annual Students' Self-Juried Show.

*Courvoisier Galleries—The Pent House*, 133 Geary Street: December 1-24, Walt Disney Originals. December 9-31, Water Colors by Byron Randall.

*De Young Memorial Museum*, Golden Gate Park: Continuing through December: Photographs of the Southwest by Josef Muench. Chinoiserie Porcelain and Textiles. Spanish Peruvian Furniture. Pencil Drawings of California Towns, by Edw. H. Suydam. Arts and Crafts by the Campfire Girls and the Presidio Open Air School. Pre-Columbian Peruvian Textiles. Children's Drawings and Puppets made in the Museum Classes.

*Duncan, Vail Company*, 364 Sutter Street: Continuing through December 6, Drawing by T. Sim.

*Gump Galleries*, 246 Post Street: Original Celluloids. December 4-24, Phil Nesbitt's "Circus", being amusing water colors of animals and other circus characters.

*Mills College Art Gallery*, Mills College, Oakland: December 6 to January 7, Reproductions in facsimile of French Drawings. Through December 17, Show of Photographs by Sybil Anikev. Gallery open to the public without charge, Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 2 to 5 o'clock. Open daily, the Bender Room of the College Library continues the Exhibition of Books on the Book Arts, in honor of Gutenberg Anniversary.

*Oakland Art Gallery*, Municipal Auditorium. Oakland. Continuing through December 10, Annual Exhibition of the Bay Region Art Association. December 14-31, Exhibition by the Thirteen Watercolorists. Selections from the Permanent Collection.

*San Francisco Museum of Art*, War Memorial, Civic Center. Continuing through December 10, Works by Werner Phillip. Paintings by Geneve Rixford Sargent. Opening December 10 and continuing throughout the month, Works by William Gaw contained in the Museum's Collection. Drawings by Diego Rivera. Prints by Hiroshige. Paintings from the Museum's Collection. Continuing through December 21, Second Annual Benefit Exhibition. Continuing through January 2, Mural Conceptualism.

*Vera Jones Bright Gallery*, 165 Post Street: Illuminated Manuscripts, dating back to the 10th Century, reproduced for Christmas Cards.

## Conceptualism

By BECKFORD YOUNG

*Continued from Page 1, Col. 1*

both the cause and ourselves.

In looking back over the history of the arts it would appear that they have followed and developed in the peculiar materials, tempo, and spirit of the locale. The closer this correlation, the greater the employment of and demand for these talents.

America is a strange and exciting place for those who visit it for the first time. It is a country which has sprouted out of its own resources and has developed with extreme rapidity and force. Any traditions which may have been imported are well mixed now and form the basis of a culture unique in history. If any ancient tradition does exist it is that of the primitive Indian and yet this tradition can apply to us no more than can the traditions of the Old World. Possibly as artists we have maintained Old World traditions—traditions of paint and marble—and yet we live in a civilization of speed, electricity, plastics, synthetics, concrete, glass, and steel. Old World traditions cannot apply within the tempo and the economics of our time. One sculptured column of the Gothic period probably would take as long to carve as does the entire construction of our largest buildings of today.

If we are to be a part of our age, we must possibly create a new aesthetic and use the materials with which we build in the tempo and manner of our time. When we can incorporate the materials of construction within the laws of engineering principles and constructional efficiency, when we can use glass, steel and concrete as the Greeks used marble, then we will have a true aesthetic of our period and will no longer have to doubt our value to our time.

Our tendency has been to look abroad for laws of art or else to make a record of the things about us. In both these cases we are only looking on. Certainly we have found that working in the metals, glass, and plastics of our time is stimulating and opens to the artist a vast field in which to work.

*Willard E. Worden Gallery*, 312 Stockton Street: Through December, Exhibit of English Mezzotints.